

Message Text

SECRET

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44

ACTION SS-25

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R 110855 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8618

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 1482

EXDIS

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, SN, AS

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN FORCES, ANZUK AND FPDA

REFERENCE: A. STATE 065039; B. CANBERRA 2065

1. NEW ZEALAND DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER LYNCH IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE TODAY GAVE EMBASSY OFFICER RUNDOWN ON LATEST AUSTRALIAN MOVE RELATED TO ANZUK AND FPDA, ASKING THAT FOR TIME BEING INFORMATION BE HELD VERY CLOSELY. HE SAID IN MIDDLE OF LAST WEEK AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER PARKINSON IN SINGAPORE DELIVERED NOTE TO GOS SETTING FORTH GOA POSITON, AND ON FIRDAY, APRIL 6 PARKINSON MET WITH GOS DEFENSE MINISTER GOH. GOH LISTENED QUIETLY TO PARKINSON AND APPARENTLY RESTRICTED COMMENT TO OBSERVATION THAT GOS WOULD LIKE TO TALK TO GOA DEFENSE MINISTER BARNARD AT EARLY DATE.

2. DRAWING ON MEMORY LYNCH RECALLED THAT NEW AUSTRALIAN
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POSITION IS THAT BATTALION, BATTERY AND PART OF SINGALS UNIT WOULD BE WITHDRAWN BY EARLY 1974, LEAVING TOTAL OF ABOUT 600 MEN. DURING 1974 REMAINDER OF SINGALS GROUP AND OTHER FORCES WOULD BE WITHDRAWN SO THAT 24 MONTHS FROM NOW, I. E., APRIL 1975, AUSTRALIAN FORCES IN SINGAPORE WOULD BE DOWN TO ABOUT 150. THESE WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE PART OF ANZUK BUT WOULD ENGAGE IN BILATERAL RESPONSIBILITIES WITH GOS SUCH AS TRAINING AND MILITARY ADVISORY POSITIONS. LYNCH HAD NO INFORMATION ON PLANNED AUSTRALIAN NAVAL PRESENCE HERE BUT OBSERVED THAT IT NEVER HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT. HE WAS NOT AT ALL CERTAIN ABOUT GOA PLANS FOR MILITARY PRESENCE IN MALAYSIA BUT BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE ALSO PROPOSALS FOR REDUCTIONS THERE.

3. LYNCH COMMENTED THAT GOA MOVE DOES NOT REALLY SURPRISE GNZ OR UK FOR BOTH GOVERNMENTS HAVE EXPECTED, SINCE ALP VICTORY LAST NOVEMBER, THAT GOA PARTICIPATION IN ANZUK AND FPDA WOULD BE OF LIMITED DURATION. HE OBSERVED THAT THIS RECENT MOVE APPEARED TO ACCELERATE BY ABOUT 12 MONTHS WHAT THEY HAD EXPECTED EARLIER. HE ALSO MADE OBSERVATION THAT CARRINGTON VISIT TO AUSTRALIA MAY HAVE ACCELERATED RATHER THAN RETARDED WHITLAM' S SCHEDULE, USING PHRASING THAT CARRINGTON VISIT MAY HAVE RESULTED IN "CATAPULTING" WHITLAM' S TIME- TABLE.

4. LYNCH SEES GNZ AND PROBABLY UK POSITIONS AS BEING PREPARED TO CONTINUE IN FPDA. GNZ BELIEVES THAT EVEN WITH TOTAL AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCE WITHDRAWAL THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND LOGISTICAL SUPPORT OF GNZ FORCES IS POSSIBLE, AND THAT THEIR CONTINUED PRESENCE IS POLITICALLY DESIRABLE. THERE IS NO POLITICAL PRESSURE IN NEW ZEALAND FOR WITHDRAWAL OF FORCES NOR IS THE FINANCIAL COST OF KEEPING THEM HERE PROHIBITIVE.

5. NEW ZEALAND, AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONERS ARE MEETING TOMORROW WITH THEIR STAFFS TO DISCUSS LATEST GOA MOVE. LYNCH SMILED AS HE REFERRED TO THE MEETING AS " CONSULTATION,"

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IMPLYING THAT IT WAS CONSULTATION AFTER THE FACT.

6. COMMENT: THERE IS REPORT THAT DR. GOH WILL
LEAVE FOR EXTENDED TRIP ABROAD IN ABOUT 2 WEEKS
TIME. PRIME MINISTER LEE RETURNS FROM US THIS
WEEK- END. IF BARNARD IS TO MAKE EARLY TRIP AND IS
TO SEE BOTH LEE AND GOH, IT PROBABLY WILL HAVE TO
BE IN NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.
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